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The information contained therein came to my notice only a few hours previous, and as the vessel was about to arrive in New York this morning, I was compelled to send a cable direct in order to anticipate her, and therefore considered it inadvisable to wait until to-day to communicate with the Department in regular form.

While I think it advisable for the quarantine officers to be placed upon the alert, I do not think they will be justified at this time in proceeding to extreme measures without more definite advice from me. I shall make the most thorough investigation of the question, and, as before stated, will give the Department and the health officials timely notice.

The bills of health of my predecessor did not disclose the true conditions here. The official reports to him mentioned only 3 cases which occurred in public institutions. They did not cover the cases coming within private practice. They were therefore not within my view of a satisfactory character.

The first bill of health that I issued had noted upon it the following :

These cases are the only ones reported to me by the Government medical officials. There have, however, been some fifteen or more cases and half as many deaths of yellow fever in the city of Kingston during the past six weeks, but I am not warranted in pronouncing it epidemic pending further investigation which I am making. Should it become epidemic advice will be forwarded by cable.

I propose changing the figures to correspond with the facts until I have completed my investigation of the subject and determine what would be the proper course in the matter.

I shall be pleased to receive any instructions which the Department may see fit to give me at the instigation of the medical officials. I consider the situation here somewhat grave, but, as before stated, I do not think it wise to precipitate any so-called scare on the subject until I am more thoroughly satisfied.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

LOUIS A. DENT,  
*United States Consul.*

Hon. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE.

JAPAN.

*Epidemic of dysentery.*

YOKOHAMA, September 3, 1897.

SIR : I have the honor to call your attention to the grave importance of the dysentery, now exceedingly prevalent, and, for some time past, annually increasing epidemic in Japan.

The etiology of this form of enteritis has not, as yet, been satisfactorily worked out, though able pathologists, among others, Baelz, Kitasato, and Ogata, have devoted much time to the investigation of the disease. That it is not the so-called amoebic dysentery seems certain, as well as that it differs in many respects from the forms of enterocolitis usually met with in the tropics. It is, unquestionably, highly infectious, and there is much evidence that the propagation of the malady takes place through infection of the drinking water.

Topographical and meteorological conditions (with the exception of high temperature) seem to exercise little or no influence on the development of the disease. The present epidemic is more severe in country districts than in the cities, and as prevalent in high mountain regions as in low lying and marshy places. The comparative exemption of the cities is, perhaps, explicable by the facts that the urban popula-

tions are better educated as to the dangers of impure water than the rural classes, and that great effort is being made to improve the water supply of the larger cities. It must be remembered, too, that the fertilization of fields and gardens by night soil, which is universal, almost insures the contamination of the streams, and that the wells of the people are, with few exceptions, in most dangerous proximity to their privies.

The course of the disease is usually acute and brief, while sequelæ, such as abscess of the liver, and persistence in chronic form, are, comparatively, uncommon.

As the great infectiousness of the disease is beyond doubt, and it is evident that little can be done by mere inspection here, no matter how thorough, in detecting mild or incipient cases among those taking passage for abroad, I beg to suggest that special inquiry be made upon all ships arriving from Japanese ports, as to the occurrence of dysentery during the voyage. Further, that passengers and crews be closely watched, and all stools passed inspected, during the time of detention for examination at quarantine; and that, if the disease be found, or suspected, stringent precautions be taken.

It is unfortunate, with reference to the proper measures to be taken in quarantining for this sickness, that the incubation period is unknown. It may, however, I think, be assumed to be short, probably under seven days.

The Japanese authorities have recently revised their regulations for dealing with dysentery, making them as severe as those for the management of cholera, and including a quarantine of one week for all infected houses.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

STUART ELDRIDGE, M. D.,  
*Sanitary Inspector, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SUPERVISING SURGEON-GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

YOKOHAMA, September 3, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that I have, personally, imported a large formaldehyd generator, of the Moffat pattern, which I shall make use of for disinfecting purposes, when necessary, pending the erection of the steam plant of the P. M. and O. & O. S. S. companies.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

STUART ELDRIDGE, M. D.,  
*Sanitary Inspector, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SUPERVISING SURGEON-GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

*Sanitary report from Yokohama.*

YOKOHAMA, September 3, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to forward my regular report of infectious disease in Japan for period August 24 to September 2, inclusive.

The increasing prevalence of dysentery is shown by even the very incomplete statistics which it presents.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

STUART ELDRIDGE, M. D.,  
*Sanitary Inspector, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SUPERVISING SURGEON-GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*